A Glossary: What The Staffing Ratings Mean

Total staffing rating: Medicare rates overall staffing based on the average number of hours worked by registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), nurse aides and nurse administrators for each resident. Ratings range from "much below average" to "much above average." Medicare takes into consideration the mix of residents, so that a facility with more residents with severe needs can be fairly compared to a facility with a more independent population.

Registered nurse (RN) staffing: Medicare rates RN staffing based on the average number of hours worked by registered nurses and nurse administrators for each resident. The ratings range from "much below average" to "much above average." Medicare takes into consideration the mix of residents so a facility with more residents with severe needs can be fairly compared to a facility with a more independent population.

Residents per nurse on best-staffed days: The average of the number of registered and licensed practical nurses per resident on the 10 percent of days when nurse staffing was highest. Lower numbers are better: Nurses have fewer residents to monitor. This gauge excludes nurses whose jobs were primarily administrative.

Residents per nurse on worst-staffed days: The average of the number of registered and licensed practical nurses per resident on the 10 percent of days when nurse staffing was lowest. Lower numbers are better: Nurses have fewer residents to monitor. This gauge excludes nurses whose jobs were primarily administrative.

Residents per aides on best-staffed days: The average of the number of nurse aides per resident on the 10 percent of days when direct care nurse staffing was highest. Lower numbers are better: Aides have fewer residents to monitor. Aides include certified nursing assistants, medication aides and nursing assistants in training.

Residents per aides on worst-staffed days: The average of the number of nurse aides per resident on the 10 percent of days when direct care nurse staffing was lowest. Lower numbers are better: Aides have fewer residents to monitor. Aides include certified nursing assistants, medication aides and nursing assistants in training.